

DURHAM COMMUNITY SAFETY AND WELLNESS TASK FORCE

2ND QUARTERLY REPORT OCTOBER 28, 2021



CONTENTS

01

FORWARD

02

INTRODUCTION

03

MEMBERSHIP AND ROUNDTABLES

04

CRIMINAL LEGAL SYSTEM

10

CRISIS CARE RESPONDERS/911

15

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER (SRO)

18

VIOLENCE INTERVENTION/DE-ESCALATION

22

CONCLUSION

23

REFERENCE



FORWARD

Durham, NC is a striving city that has been experiencing some challenges as a result of the vestiges of our past, the ripple effect of policies and laws, and the unfair economic practices that threaten various forms of security for so many of our residents.

We want all our residents to feel empowered, because they are truly empowered. We want our residents to feel safe and well because institutions are listening to them, and co-planning actively to create policies, laws and initiatives that are sensitive to our residents' needs. We want no vulnerable residents in Durham, so we will not relent in our endeavor until there are equitable policies that do not unfairly target one group over the next.

Durham belongs to all of us, and we all should reap the benefits of her growth and prosperity. Our task force is committed to lifting all our residents (especially those who have traditionally been excluded from the table of power), and giving their voices a microphone, so they can be heard and seen by policymakers.

This is our home. This is our community. This is Durham, NC!



INTRODUCTION

This quarterly report coincides with a time when we as a community reflect on what we are grateful for. Among my thanksgivings is gratitude to the Crisis Response/911 Roundtable for the insightful, informative Town Hall meetings of Oct 15 and 16. Even though I was not able to attend the entire time the message I received was clear and compelling. Our safety and well-being depend on relationships of trust, respect, and belonging. We are asking anew of each other to provide what is required for recovery and sustainable well-being. Shanise, Manju, Isaac, Jennifer, and Xavier, thank you for bringing forth life experiences, both civic and personal, that describe what we seek most when in crisis, and what I heard is predictable, humane, non-judgmental attention.

This understanding extends to Dr. Ajenai Clemmons' research that exposes the distress and injustice of unpredictable, judgmental behavior from law enforcement officials towards young black men in Durham's least safe neighborhoods. Protection from harm was not experienced as a right to predictable, humane attention but as an event with the potential for misunderstanding and punishment. Those interviewed recognized that their safety and well-being ultimately depended on being respected and wholly valuable.

The Criminal Legal System and Violence Interruption/De-escalation Roundtables are discovering similar truths. When we approach wrongdoing, harm, and crises invested in what laws were broken by whom, and which punitive means to employ, we can easily ignore how others are impacted and what is ultimately needed from the community for an immediate and sustaining recovery for all involved. We are discovering our source of safety is from humane, interdependent relationships.

I've come to realize how little we encourage and welcome emerging services to the community and how uncommon collaborations are among those dedicated to serving the many needs of residents. I hope we pursue fully identifying the social wealth of individuals and organizations in Durham and share this wealth with parents, students, teachers, violence interrupters, crisis responders, all who have harmed and all who have been harmed, to form bonds of trust, interdependency, and repair.

--**Marcia Owen**, Community Safety and Wellness Task Force Co-chair

In response to Marcia's summary reflections of this quarter, I'd simply add one thing. My sense from the School Resource Roundtable's community conversations up to this point (with administrators and educators) is that those working in our schools would benefit from having more adults in their buildings who are skilled in mental health services and restorative practices who are embedded within the school community daily. As Marcia has mentioned, there is an expressed need for relationship-building in these spaces.

--**Xavier Cason**, Community Safety and Wellness Task Force Co-chair

MEMBERSHIP AND ROUNDTABLES

Though there are 17 spots on our Community Safety and Wellness Task Force, two of these spots are presently vacant. The City of Durham and Durham Public Schools have fielded invitations for residents to apply for these vacancies. The fifteen other members of the task force have volunteered to work with specific roundtables, so we could collectively ensure that our focus has more precision. Below, you will find each of our four roundtables with its corresponding membership. Our roundtables, being a sub-committee of the larger task force, include both official members of the task force, as well as, ad hoc members (indicated with an asterisk) from the public who have also dedicated their time and expertise to improving Durham's Safety and Wellness. Our roundtables and their membership are listed below.

Criminal Legal System

Andrea Hudson, Marcia Owens, Jatoia Potts, Mike Sistrom, Marion Bailey*, Leslie Nydick*, Libria Stevens*, Jessica Fludd*, and Renee Shaw*

Crisis Care Responders/911

Jennifer Carroll, Xavier Cason, Shanise Hamilton, Isaac Villegas, and Manju Rajendran

School Resource Officers (SROs)

Xavier Cason, Alec Greenwald, Jesse Huddleston, Nori McDuffie-Williams, and Tyler Whittenberg

Violence Intervention/De-escalation

Wanda Boone, Marcia Owen, Samuel Scarborough, Earl Chestnut*, Nia Wilson*, David Crispell*, Randy Trice*, Regina Mays*, and Ashley Canady*

***Not an official task force member, but has volunteered the experience, expertise and time to support Durham's community safety and wellness through their active involvement on respective roundtables.**

CRIMINAL LEGAL SYSTEM

Second Quarterly Report

In our exploration of the criminal legal system from first arrest through first appearance in court, focusing on finding places for more early intervention and diversion, we've met with Christie Long, director of Pretrial Services, Elaine Evans, Chief Magistrate, and Gudrun Parmer, CJRC executive director, and members of her staff. We have had four RTs with CJRC staff. The first focused on diversion and specialty courts, mental health court, and adult drug dependency court. The second focused on mental health, drug treatment, and other services CJRC provides to justice-involved folks inside and outside the jail. The third focused on re-entry resources and possibilities. The fourth was a general follow up session on the previous three topics.

We've also had four Listening Sessions with family members of homicide victims hosted by Marion Bailey and the Religious Coalition for a Nonviolent Durham. These were not open to the general public or other Task Force members. The insights gained from these listening sessions are profound, and our team continues to explore further on how to ensure that the justice system considers the needs of surviving residents in a more meaningful and impactful way.

With the large focus of our roundtable, our investigation of the criminal legal system is taking us “deep and wide”.

Upcoming Plans

- Examine jail conditions and programs. That will involve RTs with appropriate jail staff. We have already discussed CJRC jail programs with CJRC staff on 10/20. We hope to have Listening Sessions with former detainees.
- Continue to examine the re-entry process. We discussed reentry with CJRC staff, including the director of the Local Reentry Council, on 10/27. We hope to have LS's with formerly incarcerated individuals who were in the Durham County jail and returned home as well as those who returned from state or federal prison to home in Durham and have used existing reentry resources and programs.
- Meet with representatives from the DA's office, the Public Defender's Office, and with the District Court and Superior Court judges.
- Once we've examined more of the criminal court system, we'll turn to the civil court system, especially family court and Abuse, Neglect and Dependency Court.
- Defer further examination of how individuals with mental illness encounter the criminal legal system until the Stepping Up Initiative completes updates to its 2019 System Intercept Map on the same topic. The CLS RT shouldn't try to duplicate that effort. Stepping Up expects to complete its study and report the results to the county in February 2022. Here is their basic mandate: "the purpose of the collaborative mapping process is to identify resources and gaps in services to divert people with mental illness from the criminal justice system. At each intercept (0 to 5), the idea is that we will be able to say what resources we do and do not have in the Durham community action planning being around what we don't have."

Goals and Emerging Proposals

- To reduce incarceration and increase diversion for appropriate individuals so as to focus and improve the criminal legal system's response to harm. Key points of early intervention and diversion to Pretrial Supervision and alternative/specialty courts are the initial response of law enforcement, the magistrate appearance, and especially First Appearance before the District Court judge before a trial process and jail sentence commences. Decreasing incarceration also requires increasing the number of unsecured bonds issued for appropriate individuals.
- To address the perspectives and needs of crime victims and their families from the initial event through long-term care and support, including, but not limited to the criminal legal system.
- To make the criminal and civil court process--specialty courts, criminal court, family court--more efficient, equitable, and humane for all involved.
- To make the jail conditions and programs more humane, effective, and focused on rehabilitation and re-entry.
- To improve the community-wide effort to welcome the formerly incarcerated back home to Durham and help them begin their lives again.
- To create permanent structures of community access, accountability, and transparency into the city and county agencies and courts involved in the criminal legal system.

Preliminary Recommendations

Goals and Premises

- Goal- to create a cohesive system of wrap-around support and services for crime victims and their families to parallel what exists and what the Task Force will propose improvements in for justice-involved individuals. It should not be limited to providing support for crime victims and their families at the initial crisis response or death notification, nor be limited to the context of the criminal legal/court system since only a minority of gun crimes and homicides result in arrest, let alone a trial.
- 1st Premise- the system can build on/adapt the current model for how domestic violence victims are cared for in Durham.
- 2nd Premise- the system needs to “live” in a distinct, publicly funded office within a distinct city or county agency. It needs a physical location and dedicated staff. It should work with, but not be under the direction, of law enforcement, as it currently is with victims’ advocate officers in the DPD, the DA, or the CJRC. The new Department of Community Safety seems the most logical host.
- 3rd Premise- the general “rule” of funding for such a system should be to roughly equal the amount of per individual spending for crime victims and families as on justice-involved individuals from incarceration, diversion, trial, and reentry.
- 4th Premise- the new office/dept of victims’ support/services needs to have a full-time director/coordinator and at least one case manager. The director/coordinator would work with partner agencies and community organizations providing victim support services and help build up a peer/volunteer network.

Preliminary Recommendations

- Trained Individuals should accompany law enforcement on 911 calls for violent crimes, especially homicides, to the crime scene and/or to victims’ homes. This should build on the existing services DPD and Sheriff’s Office emergency chaplains are supposed to provide. These individuals trained in trauma support could be volunteers, especially those who are also crime victims or the family members of homicide victims. They would focus on supporting the victims and family members, doing the death notification in the case of homicides, explaining how the criminal process will unfold, and connecting them with needed services. They would not attempt to investigate the crime. At the same time, law enforcement would not make the death notification or attempt to counsel the victims or family members. Again, the system could model what is in place with the trained, volunteer victims’ advocates for domestic violence cases.
- The city and county should provide the necessary resources to the local agencies and organizations who would provide the counseling and trauma support services to victims and/or their families in the long-term, as they do for the short and long-term mental health and addiction recovery services for justice-involved individuals and domestic violence victims. The city and county should increase their support of local nonprofits engaged in these services.

Preliminary Recommendations (Cont.)

- There should be trained, perhaps volunteer victims'/victims' family advocates on call at local hospitals to help victims' family members and advocate for and help them communicate with investigating law enforcement officers and hospital staff.
 - The DPD and Sheriff's Office detectives need to have consistent guidance on when and how, not if, to allow family members to view the bodies of homicide victims and be required to follow it. The "body is a crime scene" explanation for not allowing even viewing of the body at the hospital is not acceptable.
- A dedicated case manager working for the new office/department of victims' services/support would begin to work with family members at that point and stay with them for the duration of either an arrest and trial process or for the duration of the family members' need for counseling and support. The case manager would not provide that counseling and support, but they would connect the crime victims and family members to the appropriate local providers. Again, in much the same way domestic violence victims and justice-involved individuals are treated. That case manager would also help homicide victims' family members manage communication with law enforcement and the DA's office when an arrest is made and a trial occurs. The case manager could also work closely with community nonprofits to support their ongoing work in this regard.
- The city and county should also provide homicide victims' families the victims' compensation, currently \$5k maximum, automatically on the front end to cover burial expenses. The new office/dept of victims' services/support can then seek reimbursement from the current state Victims' Compensation Fund. Homicide victims' family members should not have to fill out the application forms and navigate that onerous process.

Pre-Arrest Diversion for Law Enforcement Preliminary Recommendations

These recommendations are also for Durham's new Department of Community Safety, and the Crisis Response RT to consider.

- A key to increasing diversion from arrest and jail is appropriate intervention and referral at the initial crisis response. This would build on the services of CJRC's Office of Pretrial Services, Post-Arrest Diversion and Misdemeanor Diversion Programs. The referral mental health, addiction, social welfare, and other resources must also be sufficient.
- Responding DPD officers and DSC deputies need to have clear direction in the form of an Executive Directive/General Order from the Chief and the Sheriff that the expectation is that individuals they encounter who have committed misdemeanor offenses, especially juveniles, are not to be arrested, but rather are given citations and diverted to the Misdemeanor Diversion Program. The officers/deputies must document why they did not divert, but rather were arrested. That documentation should be part of the magistrate's determination.

Preliminary Recommendations (Cont.)

Specific Preliminary Recommendations

They are listed in the order in which they would occur in the criminal legal system from arrest, through magistrate court, through post-arrest diversion, through jail, through First Appearance, to re-entry. The recommendations do note which county agency or court would be most involved in implementing the recommendation.

- Allow the Office of Pretrial Services earlier and more thorough access to arrested individuals before and during their magistrate appearance. Increase Pretrial hours of operation at the Jail. This would allow magistrates to become a key, early source of referrals for Pretrial Services/Supervision. It will require changes to jail and magistrate court procedures.
- Have trained volunteer or paid civilian staff “on call” at the jail to meet with arrested individuals and assist them as needed in communicating with family members, employers, etc... helping them understand how the system functions, and helping connect them with potential resources. These individuals could work closely with OPTS staff.
- Improve the initial health/medical screening, especially for drug addiction issues, arrested individuals undergo at the jail. Make it more a source of information for early diversion to Adult Drug Dependency Court than merely a brief diagnosis for how the jail will deal with the incarcerated individual.
- Clarify the guidelines magistrates use for determining if and when an arrested individual is charged with “contempt of court” and faces that additional charge. Also clarify the guidelines for how magistrates review the accuracy of initial charges and resisting charges made by arresting officers. The crisis response RT and the new Department should also explore revisions to DPD and DCSO internal policies on those resisting charges on the front end.
- Encourage the AOC and the District Court judge to explore options for training all judges and court officials in dealing with the trauma experienced by defendants and victims and their families.
- Encourage District and Superior Court judges to use the flexibility they already have to issue more unsecured bonds. [The CLS RT will have more and more specific recommendations regarding local bail/bond reform in the future.]
- Establish city-county funding for existing bail/bond reform organizations to allow them to help more appropriate individuals pay for bonds.
- Expand city and county resources provided to the Mental Health and Adult Drug Treatment Courts to ensure participants have much needed mental health, substance abuse, food, permanent housing, and other resources to complete the six-month court program. And the adequate resources to remain in compliance and not re-offend in the long-term.
- Create a new civilian social worker/case worker staff position/s at the jail to provide re-entry support to detainees who aren’t already receiving that with the CJRC addiction or mental health staff.

Preliminary Recommendations (Cont.)

Specific Preliminary Recommendations (Cont.)

- Improve the coordination between the courts, the DA's office, the jail command, and CJRC jail staff so that the CJRC staff can have more advanced notice when a detainee is going to be transferred to prison or released from jail to return home.
- Implement the previously approved and funded plan to expand the mental health pod in the jail to allow female detainees to be housed there and receive those services.
- Provide more medium and long-term housing units and rental assistance for formerly incarcerated individuals/CRJC clients in specialty courts and reentry programs. Adjusting Durham Housing Authority's rules on allowing such individuals access to public housing units is not sufficient.

Other Preliminary Recommendations for the Criminal Legal System, not Related to the Above

- Overall, we have asked all the agency heads with whom we've met and will ask the others if they have expanded resource needs that they'll be presenting in 2022 budget requests or future grant requests, from which we can adapt content. The CJRC will be able to provide those in early 2022.
- All the relevant city and county-funded agencies and departments and courts with elected heads--Durham Police Dept, Sheriff's Office, Magistrate Court, Criminal Justice Resource Center and the programs and specialty courts under it, the DA's Office, Public Defender's Office, and the District Court--should have some form of community input and accountability. There should also be regular, more formalized interagency communication and coordination. The current Criminal Justice Advisory Committee and the Local Reentry Council's board are models to follow. The current Sheriff's Office Community Advisory Board and the DPD's civilian review board are not.

CRISIS CARE RESPONDERS/911

Second Quarterly Report

What challenges have you faced this quarter in conducting your review of existing resources?

As a roundtable, we've had to brainstorm how to provide forums to hear from the public in the midst of a pandemic. The usual venues for assembling community residents for listening sessions have been unavailable to us given the health risks involved in in-person gatherings. We pursued an online forum for a town hall, which required a lot of coordination with various groups to create an experience where the public could be present virtually to share with one another and with us.

Early on in our conversations as a roundtable, we decided that we should visit the 911 call center to witness the logistics of the work, which is vital to our understanding of the current emergency response system. The center has been very willing for us to visit, but the pandemic has made the scheduling and planning of such a visit difficult. We are still in the process of coordinating this.

Finally, we have made both informal and formal written requests to the Sheriff's Department for dispatch/911-call data covering the same time frames included in the Durham PD dispatch data analyzed by RTI and made available to this Round Table. We have not yet received a response to any of these requests from the Sheriff.

Second Quarterly Report

What successes have you experienced in conducting your review of existing resources?

Our first town hall was well attended and generated vigorous conversation. We are hoping to harness this energy and community wisdom a second time at a subsequent town hall event, tentatively planned for the second week of December. We are aware that certain demographics, experiences, and regions of Durham were over- and under-represented at our town hall. We will be purposively seeking insights from the Durham community in pursuit of equitable representation.

What have your reviews of existing resources (or listening sessions/town halls, etc.) revealed about community safety needs currently being addressed?

The outcomes and lessons learned during our first community Town Hall are described in detail above. Insights that emerged from these conversations with community members include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Many community members feel that there is little investment in safety and wellness in their neighborhoods other than emergency and/or armed first response.
- Many community members feel that the police officers they have interacted with have not offered useful guidance for responding to violence and promoting safety in their neighborhoods.
- Many community members place value on preventive strategies - even if those are preventive strategies that target emergent situations, such as emergency de-escalation and mediation services.
- There are some scenarios (one mentioned in the town hall involved a firearm in a public space) for which residents may not be ready for or comfortable with non-police response.
- Few community members consider law enforcement agencies to be capable of preventing gun violence, only responding to its aftermath. This was not understood as a commentary on the talent of or resources available to local law enforcement but rather as an observation about the natural limitations of policing as a public service.

We will continue to gain insights, add to these lessons, and refine our understanding of community needs as we continue with our second Community Town Hall.

Finally, we have been amassing information on existing non-police/police alternative crisis response programs across the United States. The Department of Community Safety and Wellness had already begun an internal audit of known systems, and Round Table members have also located and actively been studying a thorough audit of police alternative crisis systems across the United States carried out by the non profit organization One Million Madly Motivated Moms (1M4): <https://www.1m4.org/mcu-coresponder-info>

Second Quarterly Report

What additional insights or concerns related to your roundtable would you like to share with the community at this time?

We continue to express our concerns regarding the data collection. We are still reaching out to local departments and community organizations that respond to crises, or track data on crisis response.

Insights from our recent Crisis in the Bull Town Hall

The October 15-16 2021 Crisis Response in the Bull City Town Hall began with an introduction to Durham's Community Safety and Wellness Task Force and the new Department of Community Safety. 179 participants registered for the public town hall, surpassing our goal of at least 100 non-task force participants. We shared community agreements, explained how the task force was approved and appointed by the City Council, County Commissioners, and Board of Education, introduced the roundtables [School Resource Officers and Police-Free Schools; Criminal Legal System (Arrests, Courts, Jails); Violence Interruption and De-escalation; 911 and Crisis Response] and the community members who currently serve on the task force. We described the work that has taken place already and shared a timeline for accomplishing the commitments described in the bylaws. We explained the purpose of the town hall and welcomed questions.

Here is a link to the slides we shared with participants.

How are we already keeping each other safer?

Our day one agenda continued with an opportunity for community members to share various ways we in Durham are already keeping each other safe. Town Hall participants shared personal stories of neighbors sharing household items, holding regular meetings to build community, getting to know each other, and sharing information relevant to immediate needs and quality of life. While many participants indicated that they used applications such as 'Nextdoor' and 'WhatsApp,' one mentioned that relationships are the technology we should use to keep each other safe. On a larger scale, other participants uplifted the presence of a robust and multiracial democracy in Durham that keeps us safe, indicated by the creation of the Community Safety and Wellness Task Force. Others noted the many community-rooted elected officials who spend time in the communities they serve and take time to get to know the residents.

Second Quarterly Report

Overview of other cities' programs across diverse strategies

We heard from Atlanta's Policing Alternatives and Diversion Initiative (PAD), Denver's Support Team Assisted Response (STAR) Program, and San Francisco's Street Crisis Response Team.

PAD began a 311 initiative this year to provide supportive responses to a variety of community needs. PAD director Moki Macias noted that the program followed numerous community listening sessions, a community survey, stakeholder collaborations, and a review of 3.5 years of 911 calls for service, out of which they identified 18% of calls that had the potential for diversion to non-police response. They have trained teams that respond to 311 calls Monday-Friday from 7am-7pm. To date (they have been operating for less than a year) they have had 747 referral calls, of which 290 were considered in need of immediate response to prevent police dispatch. The remainder received non-urgent followup.

The Denver STAR program responds to 911 calls with a non-police crisis team of EMTs and behavioral health clinicians. Carlie Sailon, STAR Operations Manager, noted that 25% of people arrested by police are experiencing homelessness, and that social workers listening to police scanners quickly identified numerous low risk, low acuity calls. STAR is dispatched to seven call codes: Assist, Intoxicated Person, Suicide, Welfare Check, Indecent Exposure, Trespass/Unwanted Person, Syringe Disposal/Harm Reduction. STAR teams also patrol and can self-direct to prevent a 911 call from being made when an emergent situation is identified. To date they have responded to 1780 calls without need for police backup. Their busiest hours are 10am-1pm when business owners begin calling them for folks sleeping in doorways. (Macias from PAD noted that Atlanta sees the same pattern).

The San Francisco program responds only to "800" calls, which is a San Francisco-specific dispatch code for mental health concerns. Their team involves a community paramedic, a behavioral health clinician, and a peer health worker. After first response, the team remains dedicated to follow up and effective linkage to care. Kathleen Johnson-Silk, Director of the Street Crisis Response Team, noted that 63% of the calls they respond to require no transport and are resolved on scene in the community. About 7% of the calls they respond to result in involuntary psychiatric commitment, or a "5150"--a reference to California's involuntary psychiatric commitment law.

Understanding people's current experiences interacting with municipal first responders

The storytelling depicted the current response system as not contributing to a safe resolution to crisis situations. Participants described situations where crisis responders either did not have the skills required to resolve the crisis or exacerbated a tense situation. Several people shared about situations where responders escalated mental health crises to the point of causing harm. Others recounted how the lack of an option for unarmed responders exacerbated the anxiety and trauma of undergoing intimate partner abuse; a police officer with a gun would only add to the dangerous unpredictability of the crisis situation. A few stories displayed how police officers are unable to prevent gun violence since, by nature of the situation, they respond after the harm has already been inflicted.

Second Quarterly Report

Understanding people's current experiences making a different choice about addressing a moment of crisis

Participants shared experiences where they depended on friends, neighbors, and strangers to resolve crises and de-escalate conflicts. People shared stories about situations where they called upon trusted friends to provide assistance in moments of need. There was a collective sense that networks of relationships contribute to a safer community.

What would you like to see?

Our Crisis Response roundtable was eager to hear resident visions for their new Department of Community Safety. Throughout the town hall we listened to understand what success would look like and feel like according to Durham residents, both in terms of broad vision and in terms of concrete changes they want to see happen that can be operationalized as outcomes. Our final visioning session offered residents an opportunity to design what crisis response could look like. We asked what values, characteristics, and skills they would like to see in crisis responders in their greatest moment of need. And we described a series of common 911 call scenarios typically handled by Durham police officers or sheriff's deputies, and we asked residents to describe how they would like to see those situations addressed. Here is what we learned.



SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS (SROs)

**Second Quarterly
Report**

Second Quarterly Report

What challenges have you faced this quarter in conducting your review of existing resources?

Misconceptions about the efficacy of School Resource Officers

One challenge we have faced when interacting with community members, teachers and administrators is confronting the misconceptions about the effectiveness of school resource officers (SROs). Rather than improve safety, research demonstrates that placing police in schools negatively affects school climate. The over-policed school atmosphere can initiate, rather than alleviate, misbehavior by increasing anxiety, alienating students, creating a sense of mistrust between peers and forming adversarial relationships with school officials.[i] Instead of ensuring safety and improving behavior, police presence often increases disorder among students by diminishing the authority of school staff.[ii] In fact, the increased presence of school security, including SROs, has been associated with increases in suspension and expulsion for Black students and greater discipline disparities between Black and white students.[iii] When students perceive a negative school climate, they are less likely to be engaged and more likely to be truant or drop out.[iv] Thus, rather than make schools safer, the presence of law enforcement in schools places students of color at risk of criminalization for age-appropriate schoolyard behavior and facilitates school pushout.

School-based contact with law enforcement funnels hundreds of Black and Latinx students into the justice system, disrupting their education and social-emotional development. The presence of SROs in schools is associated with increased referrals to law enforcement for minor, nonviolent infractions.[v] After being arrested by school police officers, students face a myriad of collateral consequences that harm their future, their families and their communities, including: loss of instructional time and course credits; legal costs and court fees; separation from family; emotional and physical trauma; challenges to their immigration status; loss of housing assistance; and loss of employment.[vi] These consequences only exacerbate racial and ethnic disparities already entrenched in North Carolina's juvenile justice system.

Additionally, placing police officers in schools puts students at risk of physical harm. The Alliance for Educational Justice has documented over 150 cases of school police officers physically harming students of color by using unnecessary force when responding to typical schoolyard behavior – 4 of these incidents stem from schools in North Carolina (see the #AssaultAt Map on policefreeschools.org for more information). For immigrant students, police presence also increases the risk of deportation for themselves and their family members.

There are obvious, less discriminatory and less punitive methods of addressing school safety and student accountability than policing and exclusionary discipline. School-wide restorative justice initiatives improve school climate and hold individuals accountable while promoting emotional, social and communication skills that follow youth into adulthood.[vii] Yet this preventative measure does not receive necessary funding for adequate and effective implementation

What successes have you experienced in conducting your review of existing resources?

Our roundtable conducted a listening session with middle and high school DPS administrators. Task Force members prompted the administrators with questions surrounding successes and challenges that they experience related to safety and wellness in their schools. While we didn't propose a SRO/non-SRO binary, the administrators were overwhelmingly explicit about the importance of SROs in their buildings. Additionally, they were able to articulate some more nuanced approaches that currently contribute, or could potentially contribute, to the climate of their schools.

Task Force members are currently prepared to lead listening sessions for DPS students and DPS educators. We have identified DPS student organizers to recruit and lead student-centered listening sessions, and have attracted hundreds of DPS educators to participate in three different listening sessions before the end of the calendar year. All participants will be compensated for their time and expertise.

What have your reviews of existing resources (or listening sessions/town halls, etc.) revealed about community safety needs currently being addressed?

The one listening session that we completed with DPS administrators revealed a strong affinity for SROs in school buildings. In particular, administrators felt that SROs protected the school community from outside threats, and that there were trusting and healthy relationships between SROs, students, and administrators. When asked to imagine other resources that could contribute to the safety and wellness of their campuses outside of policing, they responded with restorative justice practices and increased funding for mental health services.

What additional insights or concerns related to your roundtable would you like to share with the community at this time?

Thinking Creatively and Imagining Schools Without School Resource Officers

Another challenge we have faced as a group is getting people to stay within the confines of the purpose of the roundtable. Specifically, getting people past the question of whether we should have SROs in schools and to start thinking about what schools need to ensure student safety and wellness without SROs.

The SWTF created our roundtable to identify safety and wellness needs related to the school setting and offer recommendations for alternatives to the current use of SROs in Durham Public Schools. Thus, conversations around the efficacy of SROs and whether we should remove them from schools detract from the creative and courageous thinking necessary for us to identify alternatives that promote student safety and wellness.

As stated by Susan Griffin, "Let us begin to imagine the worlds we would like to inhabit, the long lives we will share, and the many futures in our hands." We must literally imagine safe and supportive DPS schools without the presence of police in order to create them. Thus, to truly achieve the task with which we are charged, we must consistently and intentionally help people think beyond their fears, shed their defensiveness, and envision a future in which DPS schools meet the safety and wellness needs of students and faculty without police or criminalization.

VIOLENCE INTERRUPTION / DE-ESCALATION

Second Quarterly Report

What challenges have you faced this quarter in conducting your review of existing resources?

The Violence Interruption/De-escalation (VIDE) Roundtable continued throughout second quarter to connect and understand fully the activities of the following programs:

- Bull City United (BCU)
- Project Build (PB)
- Gang Reduction Strategy (GRS).
- Fatherhood of Durham

VIDE found that BCU has been without a director or dedicated management for at least two years and is currently without direct oversight. The lack of data and guidance has been compounded by the COVID crisis. When the pandemic emerged we understand that BCU and PB staff were redirected by the Public Health Dept to assist in protecting residents from COVID-related illness and death. We appreciate the work that BCU and PB have accomplished during these difficult times.

Additionally, all VIDE participating organizations expressed concern about the current increase in severity and occurrence of wrongdoing by youth and young adults.

What successes have you experienced in conducting your review of existing resources?

- PB connects their youth and families with an extensive and highly developed array of private businesses, CBOs, and public agencies to address the individual needs and interests of those they serve. PB has a Latinx mentor as well as other mentors from youths' neighborhoods.
- We've learned that the Global Cease Fire organization supplies data management and guidance for BCU.
- GRS recommends more attention should be paid to youth at risk of gang involvement .
- Members Ashley Canady, Earl Chestnut, Regina Mayes, Randy Trice, and David Crispell joined the roundtable and offered insight and information about community initiatives and programs.
- A review of the impact of trauma, substance use and the social determinants of health was provided with potential solutions.
- Although limited, we are aware of mental health services offered through certain programs and researched techniques. These are particularly important because community members can become certified in these methodologies. Mental Health treatment services and assistance for the addicted are available but will require compiling.

What have your reviews of existing resources (or listening sessions/town halls, etc.) revealed about community safety needs currently being addressed?

Ashley Canady, Earl Chestnut, Regina Mays, Randy Trice, and David Crispell joined the roundtable and offered concerns about the level of crime and lack of resources to address crime and community needs.

- PB connects their youth and families with an extensive and highly developed array of private businesses. We look forward to hearing from youth in the program as requested.
- The Global Cease Fire organization supplies data management and guidance for BCU. We would like to learn more about this. How often is data obtained? What data is collected? Is qualitative data obtained from the community included?
- GRS suggests universal training for youth about conflict resolution and other nonviolent responses to challenges to masculinity and other displays of disrespect.
 - There should be more exploration regarding: whether GRS has had racial equity/diversity training.
- Our exploration has revealed that there are some issues around equity and inclusion. While some policies have meaningful intention the language around these policies and how these policies have been formed have often had a pernicious impact on marginalized communities. As a result, we are highlighting the need for more sensitivity around language use, and the assumptions made about some demographic groups. Perhaps a more intentional effort to include marginalized communities in these conversations can lead to more equitable and inclusive policies.

What additional insights or concerns related to your roundtable would you like to share with the community at this time?

There are several new programs and initiatives that have been formed or expanded since the last report. These programs include Men of Vision → Uplifting; New Durham Vision → Similar to Men of Vision, building a coalition of other organizations. A question is how will women be involved? We would like to hear from these groups as well. We plan to reach out over the coming months to additional Durham VIDE organizations, such as the “Harm Free Zone,” Durham Crisis Response Center, Men of Vision/My Brothers Keepers, and similar initiatives. We will also contact Global Cease Fire to understand their data collection system and its use.

What recommendations for improvements to current programs or implementation of proposed programs are you considering at this time?

VIDE RT members are guided by resiliency-informed processes to address adverse and traumatic experiences. We understand that violence reduction is influenced by an individual’s personal and collective environment. We agree that those most at risk of doing harm or of being harmed are best served long-term by addressing social determinants of health and connecting youth and families with positive, affirming information, skills, and opportunities for healing and growth.

Implementation Recommendations

People of color are more likely (2-5 times) to have bad outcomes (economy, education, health, built neighborhood and social context*) than their white peers.

Implement a grassroots train-the-trainer model to engage, increase the activities of and/or employ peer community health workers (youth – seniors) to deliver critical programming components identified. There are currently over 40 community health workers within 7 Community-Based organizations delivering services to some of the most vulnerable populations in Durham. The components when added together will create community confidence by the delivery of strategies through known community members and community health workers and ambassadors.

Some work we are continuing to explore:

- Create a pipeline of services to address the social determinants of health*, Address adverse experiences to reduce suffering among marginalized communities, and strategies to reduce violence in the community. These services would include input from the Round Table and the community as a whole.
- Trauma will be addressed through cost effective tools such as the Community Resilience Model and Change Your Words Change Your World. Both are train the trainer programs that help treat (self-care/referral when needed) the whole person leading to better results, specifically for communities of color.
- Handle with Care “follows” a child that has witnessed violence to school to decrease challenges at school.

Strategies to Reduce Violence in the Community

Preventing violence in the built community should include discussions about adverse experiences and the social determinants of health. Violence in Durham follows the same geographical pattern as the social vulnerability indexes where SDoH are low.

Children experiencing adverse experiences are more likely to develop poor physical and mental outcomes and are more likely to commit acts of violence.

- Add Resiliency-informed processes to existing programs leading with, “What is right with you? What are your strengths?” to address adverse experiences.

VIDE members recommend that a comprehensive survey of CBOs that Durham residents and professionals may use to fully serve Durham residents most vulnerable to and affected by violence. Survey information would include purpose, scope, staff, those served, evaluation method and outcomes. Dr. Wanda Boone and the wider task force are collaborating on this survey, as well as, efforts are being made to secure the time and efforts of interns who may be able to dedicate more time to developing this survey in a more disciplined and systematic way for effectiveness.

We are also hopeful that the Department of Community Safety may want to utilize survey results with support and incentives that promote local CBO collaboration and cooperation.



CONCLUSION

The Community Safety and Wellness Task Force continues to work assiduously in our attempt to understand the not just short term reaction to the complex problems in our community, but also the root of these systemic issues and how to change psyche around effectively addressing issues around community safety.

Using a “division of labor” strategy with our four roundtables, our members are intentionally reaching out to a multiplicity of stakeholders with myriads of expertise, experience and lenses. We are extremely grateful to those individuals and agencies who/that have offered their time to share their candid thoughts with our roundtable members, as well as, respond to pressing questions that members have posed to them.

Our hope is that we will ultimately have enough data to triangulate, so that we can offer the public a credible report with sound recommendations that can help our community to heal, become ever better, and be a safe place for all individuals-- regardless of any demographic differences.

Please continue to join us at our monthly task force meetings, or our more frequent roundtable meetings. Information on our meeting time is placed on the task force’s official website. We also encourage residents to become more active, and join any of the roundtables that they think they can best support.

We, the members of the Durham’s Community Safety and Wellness Task Force, are humbled to be serving you-- the public. It is our honor.



Reference

[i] Beger, R.R. (2003). "The Worst of Both Words," *Criminal Justice Review*, 28, 336-340.; Nolan, K. (2011). "Police in the Hallways: Discipline in an Urban High School".

[ii] Meyer, M.J. & Leone, P.E. (1999). "A Structural Analysis of School Violence and Disruption: Implications for Creating Safer Schools". *Education and Treatment of Children*. 22, 333-352.

[iii] Finn, Jeremy D. and Servoss, Timothy J. "Misbehavior, Suspensions, and Security Measures in High School: Racial/Ethnic and Gender Differences," *Journal of Applied Research on Children: Informing Policy for Children at Risk*: 5:2 (2014).

[iv] Wilson, D. (2004). "The Interface of School Climate and School Connectedness and Relationships with Aggression and Victimization" *Journal of School Health*. 74(7), 293-299.

[v] Na, Chongmin and Gottfredson, Denise C. *Police Officers in Schools: Effects on School Crime and the Processing of Offending Behaviors*. *Justice Quarterly*, 30:4 (2013).

[vi] Burrell, S. and Rourke, S. "Collateral Consequences of Juvenile Delinquency Proceedings in California: A Handbook for Professionals." *Pacific Juvenile Defender Center*. (2011).

[vii] Fronius, T., Persson, H., Guckenburg, S., Hurley, N., & Petrosino, A. (2016). "Restorative Justice in U.S. Schools: A literature review." *WestEd Justice and Prevention Center*. Jain, S., Bassey, H., Brown, M. A., and Kalra, P. (2014). "Restorative Justice in Oakland Schools: Implementation and Impact." *Oakland Unified School District*.